

A NEW SPECIES OF *OSBECKIA* L. (MELASTOMATACEAE)
FROM KERALA (INDIA)¹

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(With a text-figure)

A new species of *Osbeckia* L., *O. abrahamii* sp. nov. is described here with illustrations. A diagnostic key is also provided for easy identification.

***Osbeckia abrahamii* sp. nov.**

Affinis *O. asperae*, sed caulibus crassibus, fistulosis, foliis dense pubescento-setosis, calycis tubis dense stellato-excrescentibus, calycis lobis asymmetricalibus, bracteis orbicularibus differt.

Erect, unbranched or rarely branched herb, upto 1 m tall; stem terete, thick more or less fleshy, hollow, covered with short, rigid hairs, hairs at nodes sometimes larger. Leaves simple, opposite, elliptic or elliptic-lanceolate (3.0-) 4.5 — 6.5 (-8.0) × (1.2-) 1.5 — 2.5 (-2.8) cm, base acute to cuneate, apex acute to shortly acuminate, margin entire, main nerves (3-) 5 — 7, all arising from the base, cross nervules inconspicuous above, prominent beneath; both surfaces covered with short, stiff, subappressed to ascending hairs, hairs on the nerves beneath usually longer, bristly and often appear in groups, becomes dull green to brownish on drying, chartaceous; petioles (3-) 5 — 9 (-12) mm long, appressed hairy. Inflorescence axillary or terminal, few flowered short panicle, bracts orbicular, broader than long 2.0 — 4.0 × 3.5 — 5.5 mm, appressed hairy above, glabrous beneath, sometimes series of bracts remain persistent on the peduncle. Flowers bisexual, 5-merous, sessile or with a very short pedicel of about 1 mm long. Calyx-tube broadly urceolate, (4.0-)

5.0 — 7.0 (-8.0) × (3.0) 3.5 — 5.5 (-7.0) cm, densely covered with flat, stellate or very slightly stalked emergences, often intermixed with bristles, hairs on the emergences arise with a downward fashion, brownish. Calyx-lobes 5, distinctly asymmetrical, truncate, broader than long, 2.0 — 3.5 × 2.5 — 4.2 mm, unequally two lobed at apex, midrib distinct, patent hairs and emergences occur on the midrib dorsally, otherwise glabrous, long ciliated at margin, deciduous. Intersepal emergences with a terete stalk and stellate head and tuft of bristles, deciduous. Petals 5, obovate, 16.0 — 20.0 × 12.0 — 14.0 mm, ciliated at margin, pink or purple in colour. Stamens 10, equal, filaments 6.0 — 8.0 mm long, glabrous; anthers twisted, 6.0 — 7.5 mm long, including a small narrow beak, pore apical, large, connective produced into a small indistinctly lobed collar. Ovary 5.0 — 7.0 mm long, nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ adnate to the calyx-tube, free apical part densely covered with brownish appressed hairs, true crown of bristles absent; style 16-19 mm long, glabrous, curved, swollen below the punctate stigma. Capsules 7.0 — 9.0 × 4.5 — 5.5 (-7.0) mm, broadly urceolate, free portion of the capsules slightly exposed or remain enclosed by the calyx-tube. Seeds small, muricate.

Type. Travancore, Kerala, *Narayanaswami* 1379 (Holotype, CAL).

Flowering time. Aug. — Oct.

Fruiting time. Sept. — Dec.

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² Botanical Survey of India, Howrah-711 103.

NEW DESCRIPTIONS

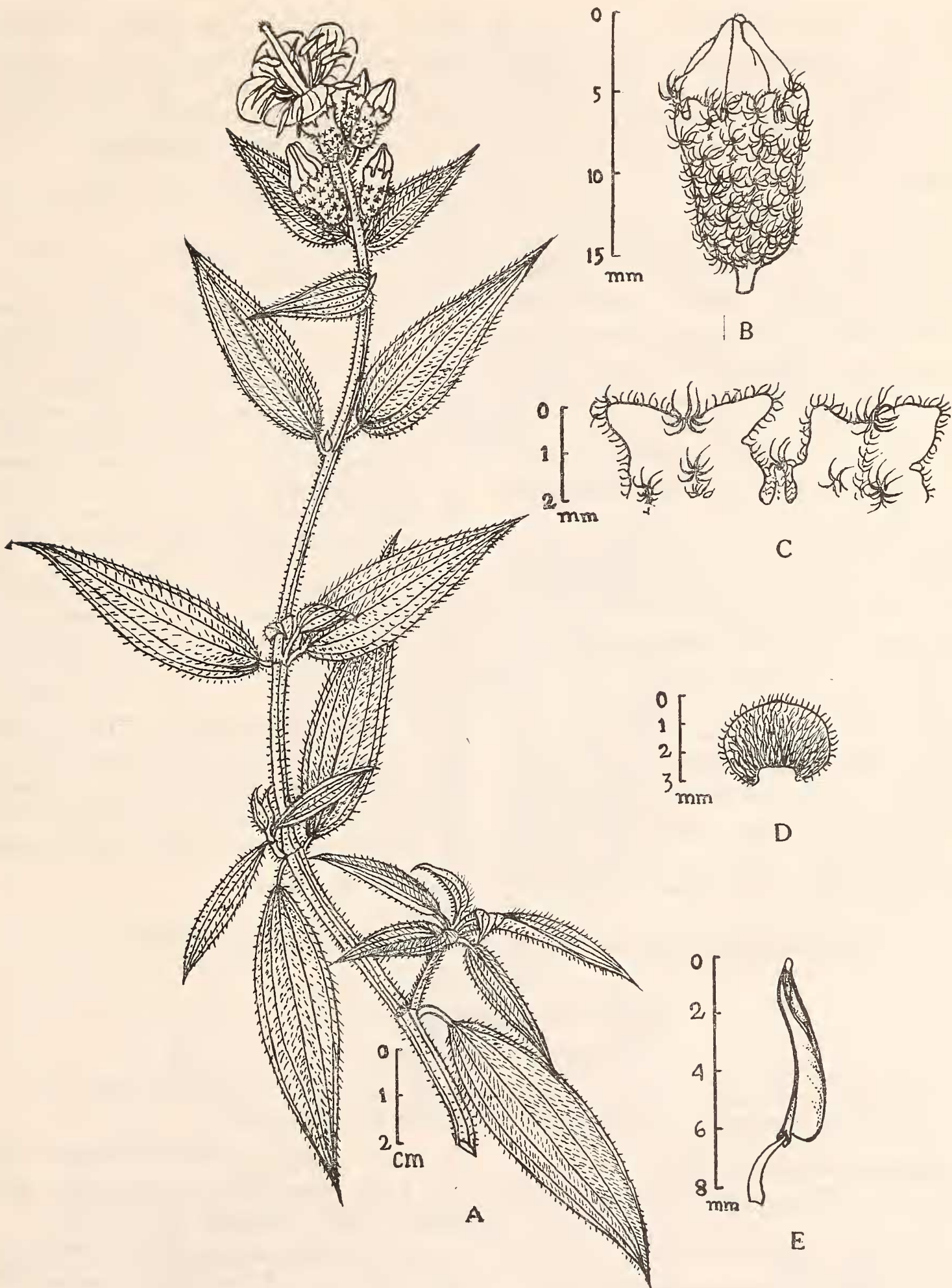


Fig. 1: A-E. *Osbeckia abrahamii*: A. habit (natural size); B. flower; C. two calyx lobes with one intersepalary emergence; D. bract; E. stamen.

Distribution. INDIA. Kerala.

Travancore, *Narayanaswami* 1707; Silent Valley, Palghat Dist., 875 m. 11.10.1965; *Vajravelu* 26161; *Koni*, Travancore, *Rama Rao* 536; Trichur, Tumbermughi, 75 m, 12.9.1976, *Ramamurthy* 48476.

This species is related to *O. aspera* (L.) Blume, but can be easily distinguished by the calyx-tube being densely clothed with stellate emergences, orbicular bracts, asymmetrical calyx-lobes, thick, hollow stems and setose pubescent leaves; whereas in *O. aspera*, calyx-tube is sparsely covered with patent hairs or bristles and without emergences, bracts elliptic with acute or sharply pointed apex, calyx-lobes symmetrical and the stems slender with sparsely pubescent leaves.

O. travancorica Bedd. ex Gamble was reduced to a variety under *O. aspera* by Hansen (1977), where he remarked that the variety is distinguished by the asymmetrical calyx-lobes and curved, strong, prickly bristles on the stem. But *O. travancorica* Bedd. ex Gamble is a different species. On examining the type, verifying the protologue and drawing by Gamble on the type material (*Wight* 1100), it is seen that, the stem is distinctly covered with downwardly curved, strong, prickly bristles; calyx-lobes not asymmetrical, rather

broadly triangular with obtuse or slightly emarginate apex. Whereas in *O. abrahamii*, the stem is covered with very short, rigid and appressed hairs, calyx-lobes broader than long, truncate and typically asymmetrical.

A diagnostic key is given below for easy identification :

- A. Stem and banches covered with short, rigid appressed hairs
- B. Calyx-lobes symmetrical, broadly triangular with acute, obtuse or slightly emarginate apex; bracts elliptic with acute or sharply pointed apex; calyx-tubes sparsely covered with bristles and simple hairs, emergences usually absent or if rarely present are restricted to the top; leaves sparsely pubescent; stem slender.....*O. aspera*
- BB. Calyx-lobes asymmetrical, broader than long, truncate, unequally lobed; bracts orbicular; calyx-tube densely covered with stellate emergences; leaves much pubescent; stem thick and hollow.....*O. abrahamii* sp. nov.
- AA. Stem and branches densely covered with strong, downwardly curved, prickly bristles *O. travancorica*

The species is named after Prof. A. Abraham, formerly Professor of Botany, University of Kerala and at present, Director of Botanic Gardens, Trivandrum, for his contributions to the systematics of the Orchid and Ferns flora of peninsular India.

OSBECKIA ARUNKUMARENSIS SP. NOV. FROM EASTERN INDIA¹

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(With two text-figures)

New species of *Osbeckia* L., *O. arunkumarensis* sp. nov. is described from Eastern India with illustrations. A diagnostic Key is also given for identification.

Osbeckia arunkumarensis sp. nov.

Affinis *O. stellatae* Ham. ex Ker. — Gawl.,

sed ramis conspicue quadrangularibus alatisque, foliis subsessilibus, calycis tubo glabro, capsulo apice nonquam setoso differt.

Annual, erect, unbranched or rarely branched herb, up to 1.5 m high; stems and bran-

¹ Accepted July 1983.

² Botanical Survey of India, Howrah-711 103.